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### In the Steps of Jael and Deborah: Judith as Heroine

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# In the Steps of Jael and Deborah: Judith as Heroine

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Judith is one of the most memorable characters in Hebrew literature. In a remarkable story of courage and resourcefulness, she saves her people by one single action that is both compelling and repugnant. Leading female characters are rare enough in Israelite literature to be constantly compared with one another, and Judith has often been likened to Miriam, Deborah, Jael, the wise women of Tekoa and Abeldeth-Maacah, and Esther.<sup>1</sup> And this is not an exhaustive list! I would like to argue that the comparison to Jael and Deborah is neither superficial nor coincidental, but that the author of Judith had the story of Jael and Deborah in the front of his mind as he wrote his story.<sup>2</sup> In fact, in my judgment the author of Judith used the story of Jael and Deborah as the model for the story of Judith.

The first parallel to draw between the stories is the obvious one: a heroine slays an enemy of Israel singlehandedly, by attacking his head. This is, in fact, the correspondence that drew me to the two stories in the first place. However, as I began to investigate the stories, I noticed that many other exact similarities were present, in plot, character and actions. Many of these parallels have been noted by other commentators before me.<sup>3</sup> However, no one, as far as I have been able to verify, has brought them all together in one place. When they are drawn together, I think that it will be plain that the author of Judith used the story of Jael and Deborah in Judges 4 and 5 as a model, and that the actions of the heroine, Judith, parallel the actions of the two heroines in Judges 4 and 5, Jael and Deborah. In this paper I will demonstrate exact similarities in the structure and plot of the stories, the characters of the stories, and certain elements common to both, particularly the song of victory.

At this point I should make it clear that I am assuming that the author of the book of Judith knew Judges 4 and 5 as single unit. Source criticism isolates Judges 5, the Song of Deborah, as a very ancient poetic piece, while placing the prose narrative of Judges 4 at a later date.<sup>4</sup> This is no doubt correct; however, the author of Judith did not use source criticism, and therefore did not separate the chapters. The author read them as one story, and this reading is reflected in the story of Judith.

First, a summary of the story of Judges 4 and 5. The plot is typical of the book of Judges: Yahweh, on account of the people's sin, allows Jabin

the king of Canaan to oppress the Israelites. The people cry out for deliverance, so Yahweh stirs up a judge to save them. Now, however, comes an interesting twist: the judge is a woman, Deborah. Deborah sends for her general, Barak, to rouse him for battle against Sisera. Barak and Deborah lead some of the tribes to battle against Sisera, and manage to defeat him. Sisera then flees on foot and comes upon the tent of Jael, identified as the wife of Heber the Kenite, an ally or friend of Jabin. Jael invites Sisera into the tent, covers him with some sort of covering, gives him milk to drink, and, when he has fallen asleep from exhaustion, drives a tent-peg into his skull and shatters it. Afterwards, when Barak arrives, she takes him into the tent and shows him Sisera's dead body. Finally, Deborah and Barak sing a great victory hymn, in which Jael's deed is lauded. This is the story as the author of the book of Judith knew it.

I would like to start my comparison by looking at the structure of the two stories. The story of Jael begins with a political struggle (which has religious implications) between the Israelites and a foreign power, moves to a climax in a private scene between the heroine Jael and Israel's enemy Sisera, which ends in his death, and concludes with a triumphant victory song. The book of Judith uses precisely the same structure. The story begins with a political and religious struggle between the Israelites and a foreign power (chaps. 1–7), moves to a climax in a private scene between the heroine Judith and Israel's enemy Holofernes (chaps. 8–15), and ends in a triumphant victory song (chap. 16). So the overall structure of the two stories is precisely the same.<sup>5</sup>

Now I will move to an investigation of the details of plot and character, beginning with the major characters of Judith and Holofernes, then filling in the details with the other characters. In that way I hope that the detail of the parallels between Judith and Jael and Deborah will be clear.

Judith enters the story at a late point in the plot, as has been noted many times.<sup>6</sup> Craven states that this is not because of lack of skill on the part of the author, but because he has prepared for Judith's entrance by creating an almost unbearable state of suspense through an account of the enemy's seeming invincibility.<sup>7</sup> I would also suggest that the author's artistic decision was influenced by the fact that Jael enters the scene quite late in her story, after the battle and defeat of Sisera's army.<sup>8</sup> Once the heroines appear, the stories move fairly quickly to their

climaxes, given the relative length of each. Of course, the story of Judith is much longer and richer in detail than the story of Jael, as befits a free-standing novella.

Once the heroines enter, they are identified. Judith is identified as the widow of Manasseh, while Jael is described as the wife of Heber the Kenite. I will not enter here into the discussion of whether ʿēšet heber means wife of an individual or female member of a certain clan.<sup>9</sup> I would suggest that, whatever the original meaning, the author of Judith would have understood the phrase to mean "wife of Heber." The important thing to notice is that both Judith and Jael are identified as married, but their husbands are, for one reason or another, absent. The same is also true of Deborah, who, in Judg 4:4, is identified as the wife of Lappidoth,<sup>10</sup> an absent spouse. Women, in patriarchal Israelite society, received their identity first from their fathers and then from their husbands, but these women receive their identity from their actions, and, in fact, give identity to their husbands, thus turning the stereotype on its head. In addition, Judith, Jael and Deborah are all, as far as we know, childless, again an unusual state in their societies. Finally, Judith and Jael, by the former's status as a widow, and the latter's membership in a non-Israelite clan, are marginal members of Israelite society. This fact emphasizes the theme in both stories of the weak (symbolized by the female) triumphing over the strong (symbolized by the male) with the help of Yahweh.<sup>11</sup>

After describing Judith, the author tells of her reaction to the bargain struck between Uzziah and the people of Bethulia (7:23–32). She is appalled, and berates the elders for their lack of faith in God. There is no parallel to this speech in the actions of Jael. In fact, one of the major differences between the two stories is that everything is known about Judith's motivation for her action, and nothing is known about Jael's. Here, however, the character of Deborah becomes the model. Deborah and Judith are both firm in their conviction that their actions accord with Yahweh's will. In Judges 4, Deborah makes a speech to Barak, giving him his marching orders and assuring him that Yahweh will be with him. However, she notes in 4:9 that Yahweh will triumph by "the hand of a woman," a motif used throughout both stories.<sup>12</sup> In Judg 4:21, Jael takes the hammer in her hand, and in the victory song in Judges 5 we are told that "she put her hand to the tent peg and her right hand to workmen's mallet" (v 26). In her speech to the elders, Judith

says, "The Lord will deliver Israel by my hand" (Jdt 8:33), an unmistakable parallel to Deborah's statement about the hand of a woman. She repeats the statement in her prayer, in chap. 9. Then, at the end of the climactic scene, she tells the people of Bethulia to praise God, who "has destroyed our enemies by my hand this very night" (Jdt 13:14). The motif of a woman's hand creates another similarity between the two stories.

After her speech to the elders, Judith goes to prepare herself for her mission. This too is without parallel in the story of Deborah and Jael (although Zeitlin, among others, has compared this to the story of Esther<sup>13</sup>). Once prepared, Judith summons her maid and they set out for the "Assyrian" camp. Face-to-face with Holofernes, she begins a dialogue that is laced with double-talk and irony. Immediately the parallel with Jael comes to mind. Jael welcomes Sisera into her tent and promises to protect him, all the while intending to kill him. "Turn in, my lord, turn in; fear not" (Judg 4:18). Jael has been taken to task many times for violation of the law of hospitality, while Judith has been condemned for lying.<sup>14</sup> While Jael does violate the law of hospitality, the act should be seen, as Soggin puts it, "in the context of a complex conflict of loyalties."<sup>15</sup> Where does one's loyalty lie? Jael clearly places herself on the side of the Israelites (her name means "Yah is God," thus identifying her with the Yahweh worshipers), and the text celebrates her for that action. As for Judith, her language is deliberately ambiguous. For example, in 11:6, Judith says to Holofernes, "And if you follow the words of your maidservant, God will accomplish something through you, and my lord will not fail to achieve his purposes." "My lord" in Greek is ho kyrios mou. Holofernes assumes she is addressing him, but every Greek-speaking Jew of the period would have heard the Greek translation of "Yahweh" in her words. This use of irony is meant to bring a chuckle of recognition from the reader.<sup>16</sup>

The correspondences now come thick and fast in the climax of the story. In the Assyrian camp Judith is invited to a banquet in the tent of Holofernes. Likewise, Jael invites Sisera into her tent. Holofernes drinks too much wine at the banquet, and passes out drunk. Jael gives Sisera goat's milk to drink, which, as has been widely pointed out, has a soporific effect.<sup>17</sup>

The sexual theme in the book of Judith, recognized by many,<sup>18</sup> is

powerful in this scene. Holofernes declares his intention of having sexual intercourse with Judith (12:12). Judith responds to his invitation to the banquet by saying "Who am I, to refuse my lord?", clearly a double entendre! Holofernes, at the sight of Judith, is described as "ravished." Wine is served, and then, at the end of the banquet, the other guests tactfully withdraw, leaving Judith and Holofernes alone. If this were a movie, the screen would be fading to black. However, this is not a movie, and Holofernes soon meets his gory end.

Mieke Bal has argued that the scene between Jael and Sisera is implicitly sexual.<sup>19</sup> Sisera enters Jael's tent. She covers him with a šēmīkāh (for a discussion of this term, see below). She offers him a special drink, and then covers him again. As he drifts off to sleep (all passion spent?), she murders him. A tie between sex and death is well-known in ancient literature, including the biblical literature.<sup>20</sup> For example, the story of Samson and Delilah presents an instance in which sexual intercourse is closely linked with the death of the man. Even though Judges 4 does not specifically state that sexual intercourse took place between Jael and Sisera, the inference is plausible. I would suggest that the author of Judith makes explicit what is implied in the story of Jael and Sisera. Sensing the sexual innuendos behind the actions of both Jael and Sisera, he chooses to make those innuendos overt in the actions of Judith and Holofernes.

After the men are asleep, the women murder them by attacking their heads, Jael by shattering Sisera's skull, Judith by beheading Holofernes. Boling suggests that the word in Judg 4:21, normally translated as "temple," raqqāh, should be translated as "neck."<sup>21</sup> I am not convinced that there is enough evidence to support the translation "neck"; clearly, though, some vulnerable portion of the skull, not necessarily the temples, is meant. In any case, both Sisera and Holofernes meet their death by means of a head injury. Finally, Judith pulls down Holofernes' bed-canopy (kônôpion) and takes it with her. The mention of the canopy or curtain here recalls the action of Jael when she covers Sisera with a šēmīkāh. The šēmīkāh is a hapax legomenon in Hebrew, and has been variously translated. LXX<sup>A</sup> has derrei (skin), while LXX<sup>B</sup> has epibolaio (covering, wrapper). In English it has been translated as a "rug" or a "wooly covering," or it has been identified as the curtain of goatskin which separates the inner portion of the tent from the outer

portion.<sup>22</sup> If this latter translation is correct (and there is no conclusive proof one way or the other), then we have a close parallel to the *kônôpion* of the Judith story. In any case, we do have a covering motif (a symbol of deceptive security?) in both scenes.

After making her way out of the camp, with the head of Holofernes stored in her food bag, Judith returns to Bethulia, where she triumphantly displays the head to the people of the city. Achior is shown the head of Holofernes and is so astonished and awe-struck that he promptly converts to Judaism. The character of Achior is loosely modeled on the character of Barak in Judges 4 and 5. He is a secondary male character who acts as a foil for the leading female character, Judith, as Barak acts as a foil for Deborah, and later Jael. In the first part of the book of Judith, Achior informs Holofernes that the Jews cannot be defeated because their God protects them, thus enraging Holofernes and setting in motion the central plot of the story. Similarly, Barak's response to Deborah's call sets the action of the story in motion in two ways: when he states that he will not go forth to battle without Deborah, he gives her the opportunity to predict that Sisera will fall by the hand of a woman, thus foreshadowing the action of Jael,<sup>23</sup> and, by leading the Israelites to the confrontation with Sisera, he begins the chain of events that allows Jael's deed to take place. After their initial appearances, both characters leave the stage, only to return after the heroine has completed her action. The parallel is quite clear here. Judith displays the head of Holofernes to Achior, just as Jael displays the body of Sisera to Barak. These events confirm Yahweh's use of a weak, marginalized member of the society in order to save it. Achior is a more fully drawn character, as we would expect in the book of Judith, and he is also a foreigner, which adds an interesting twist to the story. The conversion of Achior, without parallel in Judges 4 and 5, reflects the later date of the book of Judith. In the post-exilic period, membership in the Jewish community was determined by ethnic group and religious affiliation, while in the book of Judges membership in the people of Israel was determined by tribal affiliation. So Achior's conversion is one more symbol of the triumph of Yahweh in the book of Judith, a symbol not possible in the milieu of the book of Judges. Notice that in Daniel 1–6 (which is also post-exilic) the triumph of Daniel is always followed by the conversion of the king. In any case, Achior's function in the story is the same as that of Barak.

Finally, at the end of her story, Judith leads the victorious Israelites in a triumphant hymn to Yahweh. Many commentators have suggested that this hymn is modeled on victory hymns found in the pre-exilic literature, most notably Exodus 15 (the Song of Miriam) and, of course, Judges 5.<sup>24</sup> It seems to me that the parallel is clearest with Judges 5, especially if it is realized that the author of Judith used not only Jael as a model for his leading female character, but also Deborah. The structure of the hymns is similar; as Dancy writes: "One notable feature in common between Judith's and Deborah's songs is the way that in both of them the heroine sometimes speaks in the first person, sometimes is spoken of in the third."<sup>25</sup> Again, I would argue that this feature is not accidental. A close investigation of the structure of the hymn is called for.

Both hymns begin in the first person, with a call to bless Yahweh. The language of the Song of Deborah is notoriously difficult and I do not wish to enter into the translation debate here. Unless otherwise stated, I will be using the translation of the *RSV*. After the initial call to praise, each song continues with a poetic description of the events recounted in the prose narrative.<sup>26</sup> In v 6 of the song of Judith the person of the verb changes from first to third, to describe the action of Judith. In Judg 5:12 the person changes from the first to the second (referring to Deborah), leading eventually to a description of the actions of Jael in the third person.<sup>27</sup> Finally, each hymn ends with the destruction of the enemies of Israel: "So perish all thine enemies, O LORD!" (Judg 5:31), and "Woe to the nations that rise up against my people!" (Jdt 16:17).

Moving from structure to theme, John Craghan has noted the theme of the disruption of nature which appears in both songs: in the Song of Deborah the mountains quake when Yahweh marches from Seir (vv 4–5), and in Jdt 16:15 the mountains shake and the rocks melt at the presence of Yahweh.<sup>28</sup> Patrick Skehan has also noted that vv 13–17, an anthology of praise, contain material found in Judges 5.<sup>29</sup> For example, in v 13 Judith, having switched back to the first person, sings "I will sing to my God a new song." This is similar to Deborah's "I, to Yahweh even I will sing, I will sing to Yahweh the God of Israel" in Judg 5:3.<sup>30</sup> So the hymns contain structural and thematic similarities. The most important parallel to note, however, is the position of each hymn, coming at the end of the prose narrative, followed by a brief epilogue.

The epilogue in Judges 5 is indeed brief: "And the land had rest for forty years," a typical ending from the book of Judges.<sup>31</sup> The ending of the book of Judith, though longer, has a similar message: "And no one ever again spread terror among the people of Israel in the days of Judith, or for a long time after her death." (16:25) So Judith, like Jael and Deborah, brings peace to the land for a generation (forty years indicating a generation in the book of Judges). In fact, the book of Judith seems to embrace the theology of the book of Judges (which is the theology of the Deuteronomist).<sup>32</sup> In his speech to Holofernes, Achior states: "As long as they [the Israelites] did not sin against their God they prospered, for the God who hates iniquity is with them. But when they departed from the way which he had appointed for them, they were utterly defeated in many battles and were led away captive to a foreign country; the temple of their God was razed to the ground, and their cities were captured by their enemies." (5:17–18) The theology of the book of Judges, of course, is clear from its structure: the people sin, which brings on punishment; the people repent, causing God to raise up a judge to save them; during the lifetime of the judge the people obey Yahweh, and the land is at peace. This "obedience brings reward, disobedience brings punishment" covenant theology is exactly the theology of Achior's speech. A second commonality between the book of Judith and the book of Judges is the impermanence of the role of Judith. She comes forward for a specific task, and, when that task is completed, retires from the stage. This model is drawn from that of the judges, e.g., Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar, and of course, Deborah. Finally, and this is a very minor point, neither the book of Judges nor the book of Judith is placed in a time of kingship. Judges, of course, is part of the pre-monarchical history of Israel, while in Judith the people seem to be under the authority of a high priest in Jerusalem.<sup>33</sup>

Now I would like to point out some parallels not mentioned in the synopsis of the plot. First is the entire absence of miracle in the prose narratives of both stories.<sup>34</sup> Judith and Jael perform their deeds in completely realistic ways; they seize the chance given to them by the moment. At no point in the narrative, up until the climactic scene, is the audience assured that "everything will be all right." Only the awesome assurance of Deborah and Judith, made clear in their speeches, gives that comfort, and that is a matter of faith, not empirical proof. Second,

the deeds of Jael and Judith are not explicitly commissioned by Yahweh. They act on their own; salvation is achieved by human initiative, although Yahweh is credited with the victory. Especially in the book of Judith the heroine's reliance on the guidance of Yahweh is made clear in her speeches and prayers; yet nowhere is it stated that Yahweh told Judith to do precisely what she did. This is even more so the case with Jael, about whose thoughts and motivations we know nothing. This motif of "salvation by human initiative" is often present in the Hebrew Bible in stories about women: for example, both Ruth and Esther achieve their goals through their own initiative.

Finally, I would like to mention two correspondences which did not figure directly into the comparison of the character of Judith with those of Jael and Deborah. The first concerns the male characters Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes. Nebuchadnezzar is a king, who appears at the beginning of the story of Judith (1:1–2:13), leaves the action, and never reappears. Holofernes, the leading male character, is Nebuchadnezzar's general but wields considerable power on his own, and it is his defeat which frees the Israelites from the threat of Nebuchadnezzar. The male characters in the story of Jael have similar roles and functions. In the final form of the story, Jabin, the king of Canaan, is mentioned at the beginning of the story but plays no role in the story itself. The leading male character, Sisera, is described as Jabin's general, but he acts as his own agent, and it is his defeat which frees the Israelites from the oppression of Jabin.<sup>35</sup> The fact that this obvious parallel occurs outside of the main plot is further support for the argument that the author of Judith had the story of Jael in mind when he wrote his story. Second, the battle in both stories is followed by a rout of the respective enemies. These routs occur at different points in the narrative: the rout of the Assyrians takes place after the death of Holofernes, while that of the Canaanites happens before the death of Sisera. It is true, of course, that these scenes are common to battle stories. However, a minor similarity like this one points to an overall scheme of parallels that show the author of Judith adhering very closely to his model.

To conclude, in this paper I have argued, by citing the corresponding elements of two stories, that the author of the book of Judith used the specific story of Jael and Deborah as the model for his story. The comparison begins with the fact that both stories have heroines who save the Israelites by murdering the commander of the enemy forces,



and this murder is accomplished by destroying the head of the victim. But the parallels go beyond this central fact to correspondence in structure, plot and character. The sheer number of both large and small parallels makes the theory of the Jael model highly plausible. Nor would this model have passed unnoticed by the readers of the book of Judith. This modeling technique is a good example of the use of earlier biblical literature in the literature of the second-temple period,<sup>36</sup> and demonstrates the high esteem in which it was held at this time.

<sup>1</sup> For example, see George W.E. Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981) 106.

<sup>2</sup> The author of the book of Judith is anonymous, and may have been either male or female. Unfortunately, the English language does not have a graceful way to express a neuter human subject; therefore, when it is unavoidable I will use the masculine pronoun to describe the author. This is in no way to be taken as indicating the (proven) gender of the author.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Carey A. Moore, Judith (AB 40; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985);

Morton A. Enslin and Solomon Zeitlin, The Book of Judith (Jewish Apocryphal Literature 8, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972); John Craghan, Esther. Judith. Tobit. Jonah. Ruth (Old Testament Message 16; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1982), et al.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Robert G. Boling, Judges (AB 6A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975) and J. Albert Soggin, Judges (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981).

<sup>5</sup> Toni Craven, in her article "Artistry and Faith in the Book of Judith" (Se-meia 8 [1977] 75), makes the following statement about the structure of the book: "The form and content of Part I sketch a religious/political struggle over true sovereignty and true deity;

the form and content of Part II detail the resolution of this struggle by the hand of the widow Judith." This is true enough; however, as stated above, I would argue that the structure is actually tripartite, with the concluding victory celebrations separate from the Judith/Holofernes section.

<sup>6</sup> J.C. Dancey, for example, says "Now at last with the introduction of the heroine the narrative gets into full stride...." (The Shorter Books of the Apocrypha [CBC; Cambridge:

University Press, 1972] 95).

<sup>7</sup> Toni Craven, Artistry and Faith in the Book of Judith. (SBLDS 70; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983) 58.

<sup>8</sup> This has also been noticed by Alonso-Schökel: "The delayed appearance of Judith may be compared to the later appearance of Jael...." (Luis Alonso-Schökel, "Narrative Structures in the Book of Judith." Protocol Series of the Colloquies of

the Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture 11 [1975] 4). Of course, when Jael enters the scene the Israelite army has already won the battle; when Judith appears the Israelites are on the verge of being utterly defeated.

<sup>9</sup> For a complete discussion and further bibliography, see Mieke Bal, Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) 211–212.

<sup>10</sup> The question of whether Lappidoth is meant as a proper masculine name has been raised by some. If it is not the name of Deborah's otherwise unknown husband, what is it? Judah J. Slotki lists four midrashic interpretations: 1. It is a nickname for Barak ("lightning"). 2. It indicates her inflammatory speeches and war-like spirit. 3. It symbolizes the divine inspiration which created sparks and flames. 4. She prepared wicks for the lamps in the sanctuary (Judah J. Slotki, "Judges" in Joshua and Judges [ed. A. Cohen; London: Soncino, 1950] 186). The first two interpretations are the ones most often suggested by commentators today.

<sup>11</sup> Mieke Bal, Murder and Difference: Gender, Genre and Scholarship on Sisera's Death (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988) 20–21; Craghan, Esther. Judith. Tobit. Jonah. Ruth. 89. The notion underlying both stories is that these are unusual roles for women. As P.R. Sanday notes, in most cultures "women give birth and grow children; men kill and make weapons" (Sanday, Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981] 5). The violation of these cultural norms by these women may be perceived as dangerous; this is particularly true in the case of Deborah, who has the charisma of Yahweh (this was suggested to me by Dr. William Poehlmann of St. Olaf College in a private conversation).

<sup>12</sup> Patrick W. Skehan, "The Hand of Judith," CBQ 25 (1963) 94–110. The following comments are heavily dependent on Skehan's article.

<sup>13</sup> Solomon Zeitlin, "Introduction: The Book of Esther and Judith: A Parallel" in Enslin and Zeitlin, The Book of Judith. 1–37.

<sup>14</sup> For example, Wayne Shumaker, in Alonso-Schökel, Colloquies, 50, says: "I have compunctions about her [Judith's] methodology." For the question of Jael's violation of the law of hospitality, see Boling, Judges, Soggin, Judges, et al.

<sup>15</sup> Soggin, Judges. 78.

<sup>16</sup> For more on the use of irony in the book of Judith, see Moore, Judith. 78–85.

<sup>17</sup> As Boling puts it, "she duped him and doped him" (Judges, 98).

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion, see Bal, Murder and Difference, 105.

<sup>19</sup> Bal, Murder and Difference, 105.

<sup>20</sup> Stith Thompson titles this folklore motif "Death from intercourse," motif T182 (Stith Thompson, Motif Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends [vol 5; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955–58] 362). It has been noticed before that the influence of folklore motifs is prominent in Judith. For example, Mary P. Coote notes "In its basic pattern and motifs the story of Judith strongly resembles a type of traditional rescue story

in which a female figure assumes the role of the hero and saves a male figure (or a social group) from captivity" (in Alonso-Schökel, *Colloquies*, 21). For a further discussion of the folklore influence, see Moore, *Judith*, 78.

<sup>21</sup> Boling, *Judges*, 93, 98. 22 22 Soggin, *Judges*, 62.

<sup>23</sup> It is not germane to our purpose to determine whether or not Barak's refusal to go without Deborah is the result of fear. For a discussion of this question, see Bal, *Murder and Difference*, 45ff., 115.

<sup>24</sup> Craven, *Artistry and Faith*, Moore, *Judith*, et al.

<sup>25</sup> Dancy, *The Shorter Books of the Apocrypha*, 124.

<sup>26</sup> I would reiterate my earlier statement that the author of Judith knew the story of Jael and Deborah in its final form, as it now appears in the book of Judges; he did not separate it into sources.

<sup>27</sup> The song of Judith shifts back to the first person in v 11.

<sup>28</sup> Craghan, *Esther. Judith. Tobit. Jonah. Ruth*, 124.

<sup>29</sup> Skehan, "The Hand of Judith," 95.

<sup>30</sup> Translation by F.M. Cross and D.N. Freedman in *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975) 13.

<sup>31</sup> Cf., for example, 8:28. The book of Judges is given its structure by the Deuteronomistic Historian (Dtr).

<sup>32</sup> That is, the theology of the conditional covenant.

<sup>33</sup> Moore, *Judith*, 50.

<sup>34</sup> Enslin and Zeitlin, *The Book of Judith*, 42.

<sup>35</sup> James D. Martin, *The Book of Judges* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975) 54.

<sup>36</sup> For other examples of the use of earlier biblical literature in the literature of the second-temple period, see the category "Expansions of the 'Old Testament'" in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (vol. 2; ed. J.H. Charlesworth; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985). Many of the books in this category are in a different literary genre than the book of Judith (e.g., Jubilees); however, they do demonstrate the reuse of the biblical text in the second-temple period. The elements in the book of Judith which are not found in the story of Jael and Deborah, such as the conversion of Achior, are motifs which appear in other post-exilic books such as Esther and Daniel.

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